

# CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

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## **Mass Migration in Europe: Assimilation, Integration, and Security**

### **Testimony before the Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia and Emerging Threats**

#### **Committee on Foreign Affairs**

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Chairman Rohrabacher, Ranking Member Meeks and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify here today.

My name is Robin Simcox. I am Margaret Thatcher Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. The views I express in this testimony are my own and should not be construed as representing any official position of The Heritage Foundation.

My goal this afternoon is to highlight some of the challenges Europe will face in the future due to recent decisions made on mass migration.

*First* are the security concerns related to asylum seekers and refugees.

The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) is known to have infiltrated Europe using the unprecedented refugee flow. Yet its ideology has also proven attractive to recent arrivals who were not previously part of the ISIS orbit.

Forthcoming Heritage research documents the impact that the recent influx of refugees and asylum seekers has had on European security.

Since January 2014, refugees or asylum seekers have been involved in dozens of separate Islamist plots in Europe, leading to scores of deaths and injuries. The majority had direct ties to ISIS.

These plots took place throughout Western Europe, with Germany the target of approximately half. The perpetrators were most commonly from Syria.

Several individuals even had their asylum applications rejected but were, unfortunately, not immediately deported. This includes those who carried out vehicular attacks in Berlin and Stockholm.

*Second* are concerns over the doctrine of state multiculturalism in Europe. This doctrine accepts that different cultures will live segregated lives with no expectation to integrate, leading to the development of separate, parallel societies with competing laws and customs.

In the U.K., for example, there are dozens of sharia councils. They adjudicate on a variety of civil issues, including sharia-compliant financial advice and resolving family disputes.

These councils operate legally under British civil law. However, one recent U.K. government report carried out for the Home Office determined that these councils are encroaching on legal matters outside their purview.<sup>1</sup>

This report stated that there are now an estimated 100,000 sharia marriages without state recognition, meaning that women do not have the legal rights they should under U.K. law. Certain sharia councils were also adjudicating on child custody and domestic violence issues.

The Home Office report went on to highlight “claims that some Sharia Councils have been supporting the values of extremists, condoning wife-beating, ignoring marital rape and allowing forced marriage.”

*Third*, mass immigration can also adversely affect foreign policy.

In January 2014, *The Guardian* reported that senior officials in the U.K.’s Ministry of Defence had assessed that the reality of “an increasingly multicultural Britain” could influence future strategic defense decisions.

These MOD officials cited worries that British troops had largely been deployed to Muslim-majority countries in recent years, such as Afghanistan and Iraq. There were concerns about deploying troops in the future to countries from which British citizens or their families had historic ties.<sup>2</sup>

This was an acknowledgement that U.K. policy could see strategic interests abroad sacrificed for domestic security interests at home.

Despite the recent modest contributions to U.S. military actions in Syria, there is nonetheless the possibility of future constraints on the U.S.’s closest allies.

Chairman Rohrabacher, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, the concerns I have referred to do not exist solely because of the most recent inflow. Europe has struggled with integration and domestic security concerns for decades. Yet the most recent inflow has exacerbated these problems.

As a possible solution, European governments could more rigorously vet asylum seekers, be willing to deport those in Europe illegally, and place an expectation on newcomers that they integrate into their new environment and respect core European values.

Thank you for inviting me today and I look forward to your questions.

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<sup>1</sup>Dame Louise Casey DBE CB, “The Casey Review: A Review into Opportunity and Integration,” December 2016, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/575973/The\\_Casey\\_Review\\_Report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575973/The_Casey_Review_Report.pdf) (accessed April 23, 2018).

<sup>2</sup>Patrick Wintour, “Multicultural Britain Rejecting Foreign Conflict, MoD Admits,” *The Guardian*, January 22, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/jan/22/multicultural-britain-foreign-conflict-mod> (accessed April 23, 2018).

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